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PRESS RELEASE

Date/Time of Release: Wednesday, September 5, 2001, 10 a.m.
Date/Time of Occurrence Wednesday, September 5, 2001
Nature of Release: Sheriff's Mountain Rescue Team Receives Certification
Location of Release: Placer County

Released by Capt. Rick Armstrong, (530) 889-7816

SHERIFF EDWARD N. BONNER RELEASES THE FOLLOWING:

The Placer County Sheriff's Mountain Rescue Team has successfully completed a three-year certification process, making it one of only two nationally certified rescue teams in Northern California.

The final phase of testing required the Mountain Rescue Team, made up of Deputy Dennis Meeh and many dedicated volunteers, to simulate a downed aircraft search that included tracking, medical evaluation and treatment of an injured pilot. The team received high marks from the Mountain Rescue Association evaluators.

According to Deputy Meeh, the team trained for three full years to achieve the certification. They were also tested in snow and ice rescue, technical rescue and wilderness searching. The idea to form such a team came about after a particularly harrowing rescue in which a hunter and his dog had to be airlifted from a cliff.

"With more than 800 square-miles of wilderness in Placer County and all of the recreation that occurs here, we felt the time had come to form the Mountain Rescue Team," Meeh said. "And from the start, we've had the full support of Sheriff Bonner."

Volunteer team members, who reside all over Placer County, include: Kurt Bandilla, Kyoji Miyazaki, Mike Gnafakis, Glen Clemment, Jon Duncan, Pete Hnat, Pat O'Neill, Marge Peterson, Todd Richter, Mike Barlow and John Glabas. Search and Rescue Communications and management personnel who assisted during the evaluation were Chris Cattran, Mike Bigelow and Terry Butrym.

"This certification places us in the highest training level of any team in the nation," Meeh said.

The only other nationally certified team in Northern California is in Stanford.

This press release and others are available at www.placer.ca.gov/sheriff